

I take neither food nor drink in that house. Once outside I take a long breath and drive rapidly into fresh, pure air. Then I go to my most delicate, refined and noble nurse, for she alone is open to the appeal, and say: "I am making a great sacrifice. I am giving fifteen minutes daily to a poor family. You should do as much. You should go and live for weeks in that befouled air, sleep in those grimy beds, eat with those unclean children, be nourished by their vile, unwholesome food, and after this risk of your life and certain loss of health, accept a pittance for your sufferings."

Such things have been done before now, but we physicians have no conception of the hardship entailed and have no moral right to ask or allow such a sacrifice from any human being. Is the life of my noble nurse of less value than that of the sick person? Can I not take the patient to a hospital, or ask for the calls of a visiting nurse; or, failing these, depend upon the good offices of the neighbors?

We physicians are careless of our nurses. We are passionate to heal. In our mad race for success we call on heaven and earth to help us and drive our chariot-wheels through all obstacles, human or otherwise, as callously as a Roman Nero. And when the race for a life is won, when our case of typhoid, or pneumonia, or eclampsia is going about once more and everybody is praising us, what do we do for the exhausted nurse whose skilful hand and keen eye has saved us at every step of the long way? We are sorry she is broken down and ill; yes. Perhaps she would not be ill, if we had thought beforehand to ask: "Do you have eight hours' sleep some time in the twenty-four? Do you have two hours' fresh air? Do you have proper food? Are you furnished a bed, or an old sofa or chair to sleep on? Do you need a second nurse? If so, you must have one at any cost, even the loss of my fee."

My dear Editor, I believe that if we are simply just we must attach as high a value to the life of the nurse as to that of any sick person, rich or poor.

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### SALARY ALONE DOESN'T FIX THE STANDARD

DEAR EDITOR: The question whether nurses lower their standard by charging less than their regular rates seems to me one which each nurse should settle for herself. We cannot tell beforehand, when called to a case, what people can afford to pay, and our fees must vary as do those of a physician. I do not believe it is a wise plan to encourage a

cheaper class of nurses for those who cannot afford to pay our price, for if they need a nurse they need the best that can be had. These people do not send for a nurse until something serious is the matter, and if we are at liberty to go we should do our work for what they can pay. If we, by so doing, lower our standard, then so does a doctor lower his standard when he charges below his regular rates. Untrained or half-trained nurses should not be encouraged unless they have proven their ability to carry out the physician's orders. When we take into account the long days and nights during which we give all our thoughts and strength to the sick, we may say we are never paid in full, even though we receive twenty-five dollars a week.

I have recently located in a small town where I know I shall many times have to go below my usual fee, but these same people, I am sure, will appreciate what I do, and I shall be satisfied if I can feel that I really have helped them.

It is, after all, our life, work, and conduct that go to raise our standard, not the question of salary alone.

T. E.

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#### NURSING CONDITIONS IN GENERAL

DEAR EDITOR: A nurse in Idaho was asked what nursing conditions there are. Her reply would fit in as a description of nursing conditions in many another place; our problems are much the same all over the country.

"This is a small place and we know what the doctor and the patient and the patients' friends say about the nurses. We hear many things that we would rather not hear. But most of the faults of the nurses are faults of the woman and not faults of the training.

"We have two training-schools here. It seems to be difficult to get probationers and those in charge seem to be glad to get any one.

"If nurses were better paid and had shorter hours, do you think a better class of women would take up nursing? I certainly do not feel proud of many who are in or are just entering the profession."

W.

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#### "CONTACT INFECTION"

DEAR EDITOR: I have recently seen two articles which have a bearing on the subject of "contact infection."

In the first, a physician who was a member of the commission sent